



**POST SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2021
&
POST SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2024**

**OPENING & OFFICIAL LAUNCH ADDRESS
BY**

**HON. LOAU SOLAMALEMALO KENETI SIO
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SPORTS & CULTURE; SAMOA QUALIFICATIONS
AUTHORITY; AND NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SAMOA**

Reverend Amosa Tapua’i Kuka
Excellencies & Distinguished Participants
Chief Executive Officers, Government & Private Sector Representatives
Formal & Non Formal PSET providers
Conference Presenters & Panelists
Ladies and Gentlemen

A warm welcome to the fifth Post School Education and Training Annual Conference, and Official Launch of the Post School Education and Training Strategic Plan 2020-2024, to all of you here today, both in person and through online platforms.

The 2021 Annual Conference is on the theme; **“Improve employability through Sustainable Partnerships between post school education and training and the Workplace”**.

The importance of **quality** and **relevant** post school education and training can never be stressed enough. That is why annual gatherings of education and training providers and workplaces, is a perfect opportunity to exchange views and ideas. As these are crucial to form sustainable partnerships to improve the employability of graduates, to support the development of Samoa.

Through this Conference, the Samoa Qualifications Authority is committed to engaging with you all in an open and constructive dialogue about the continuous rapid changes, increasing complexity of workplace requirements, and Covid-19 pandemic. The ultimate aim is to continue to improve PSET programmes to meet Samoa’s needs, in particular the post Covid-19 period. In essence, PSET providers and workplaces, need to put in place smart and realistic planning and **initiate sustainable partnerships**, to continue to advance the PSET sub-sector during these critical and turbulent times.

We progressed in how we measured the outcomes of these efforts. In the past, PSET providers and students were measured with graduation ceremonies. Nowadays, they are measured with the number of employable graduates and whether their qualifications, skills and knowledge meet the needs and expectations of the workplace. Simply put, are the skills we are delivering matching the skills that are needed. These place further emphasis on the importance of **relevant** education and training to employment, and how are we meeting the needs of employers and Samoa’s labour market.

The SQA since its first PSET Conference in 2014 had been promoting **quality** and **relevant** education and training. In the 2018 Conference, it shifted focus on building partnerships between the PSET providers and workplaces. As the coordinator of PSET, regulator of qualifications and quality assurer of programmes, SQA wants to assure employers that formal training and study programmes, produce graduates with skills and knowledge that match the needs of their future careers.



SQA also wants to assure parents and students, we want our Samoa Qualifications to be recognized both nationally and internationally, for gainful employment and further studies in both Samoa and beyond our shores.

The PSET Strategic Plan 2020-2024 Vision is to be **“An inventive sub-sector that sustains the quality, relevance, accessibility and inclusiveness of PSET for all learners in Samoa”**. This is the third PSET Strategic Plan and is closely linked to the priorities of the UN Sustainable Development Goals for the next 10 years, Strategy for the Development of Samoa in the next 5 years and the current Education Sector Plan.

The new PSET Strategic Plan has four main Goals identifying a series of innovative directions designed to increase the quality and value of learning for all learners in Samoa. It will enhance access to relevant education and training opportunities, to improve sustainable livelihoods and its contribution to the achievement of national goals.

I wish to offer my acknowledgement and congratulations to the SQA Board of Directors, Management and Staff, Mata’afa Dr Desmond Amosa who was the leading Consultant and everyone involved and contributed to the development of the new PSET Strategic Plan.

Opening the fifth PSET Annual Conference and officially launching the third PSET Strategic Plan, is a great reflection of SQA and PSET progress over my five years as the responsible Minister. I am very pleased to have been given the responsibility, one that has been a very fulfilling and rewarding experience. I have come to learn and witness SQA’s development and achievements as you are witnessing today. I believe SQA will continue to prosper and achieve what it has set up to do, to produce quality and relevant graduates to meet Samoa’s development needs.

As the outgoing Minister, I use this opportunity to thank PSET providers, workplaces, students, parents and all stakeholders in our joint effort to improve post school education and training. Your presence here today is evidence of your commitment and contribution to national development.

Last but not the least, I take this opportunity to sincerely thank our development partners; New Zealand and Australia whose funding through the Education Sector Budget Support, continues to assist with annual implementation of numerous PSET activities, ensuring **access to quality and relevant PSET** in Samoa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the “Post School Education and Training Annual Conference 2021” is now declared open; and the “Post School Education and Training Strategic Plan 2020-2024” is now officially launched. Best wishes for valuable collaborations, sustainable partnerships and Strategic Plan activities implementation in the next four years.

SOIFUA MA IA MANUIA!